PITTA

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Trip Report: Manjeera WLS, Hyderabad, February 12, 2023

JVD Moorty

A view of Manjeera WLS (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Manjeera Wildlife Sanctuary, established in June 1978, is a wildlife sanctuary and reservoir located in the Sanga Reddy district (17°57′52″N 17°57′52″N) with an area spanning 20 sq km (approximately 4,900 acres). It was originally a crocodile sanctuary, developed to protect the vulnerable Mugger crocodile; today it is home to more than 70 species of birds. The reservoir, located in the sanctuary, provides drinking water to Hyderabad and Secunderabad. It lies about 70km northwest of Hyderabad.

Birds roosting at Manjeera WLS (Photo: JVD Moorty)

It has nine small islands that have extensive marshy fringes, which act as nesting sites for aquatic birds. In addition thereto, a thick cover of trees provides nesting spots for other birds. Dry Savannah-type of vegetation is found in the sanctuary. The reservoir supports both submergent and emergent types of vegetation. Plant species like *Typha*, *Ipomoea* and *Acacia* cover the periphery of the waterline, while agricultural fields surround the reservoir and river. Some of the major plant species found are *Ipomea*, *Babool*, *Prosopis* and *Vallisneria*.

Great & Little Cormorants at roost (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Mugger Crocodile (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

This wildlife sanctuary is a riverine habitat supporting Mugger crocodile, freshwater turtles, prawns, molluscs, and fish like *catla, rohu, murrel*, eel, *karugu* and *chidwa*. Among reptiles, Monitor Lizard, Mugger crocodile, turtles and cobra are present. The Indian Hare, Wild Boar, Indian Grey Mongoose and Indian Jackal have also been seen from time to time.

To conserve the Mugger crocodile, the State government established a crocodile sanctuary and today there are approximately 400 to 600 crocodiles in the sanctuary, helped by a crocodile breeding program that is carried out here. Manjeera has always been a popular destination for bird watchers, with the annual Asian Waterfowl Census also being carried out here in January.

Watchtower at Manjeera WLS (Photo: JVD Moorty)

During the migratory season nearly a 100+ species of birds have been recorded here; these include large numbers of Common Teal, Cotton Pygmy-goose and Ruddy Shelduck.

Cotton Pygmy-goose pair (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Painted Stork (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Fourteen species of birds breed in the sanctuary, including the Asian Openbill, Painted Stork, Eurasian Coot and Black-crowned Night Heron. Other birds found in the sanctuary include the Little Egret, Little Cormorant, Common Pochard, Eurasian Spoonbill, Ruddy Shelduck, Northern Pintail, Black Kite, Grey Francolin and Indian Peafowl.

Black-crowned Night Heron juvenile
(Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Northern Pintail (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Little Cormorant (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

It was with all this in mind that I reached the rendezvous at Sanga Reddy crossroads on Sunday, February 12, 2023, at precisely 7:00AM and waited for others to join me. After a half-hour wait I was joined by another carload of birders – Shafaat*bhai*, Nandu, Choudhary *bhau* and Dr Sukumar. A brief topping up of abdominal fuel in the form of *idlis* and *puris*, washed down with tea, and we were ready to proceed.

A poster at the Environment Education Centre
(Photo: JVD Moorty)

The Environment Education Centre (EEC), consisting of a museum, library, and auditorium, and displaying exhibits depicting the complex biodiversity of the wetlands, was our destination for meeting up with the District Forest Officer, Mr Venugopal, whom Shafaat*bhai* had contacted and who had offered to show us around. Bala had already started birding, having arrived just a short while before us.

Flying Fox (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

The first thing that struck our ears was the incessant chattering of the Flying Foxes with their upside-down view of the world around them, probably commenting on our downside-up presence below them!

We started off, full of anticipation, towards the dam, after having had a *darshan* of the lazing crocodiles at the EEC. Up the stairs on to the *bund*, plenty of water, but devoid of birds! On a closer look we also realised that the water level wasn't very good either. On the Acacia trees and towards one small patch of reeds was a not-too-big flock of birds: Egrets, Cormorants, and Painted Storks, all of them busy making forays in and out to keep their nesthockers fed and fit.

Fisherman on his raft (Photo: JVD Moorty)

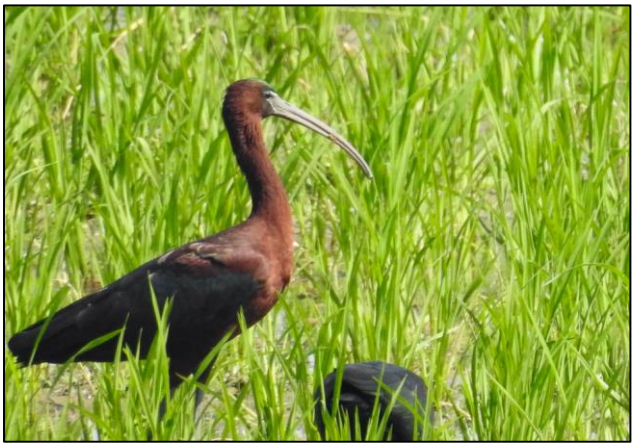
Grey-headed Swamphen with young (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Meanwhile out on the water was a lone fisherman aboard his thermocol raft, collecting his bits of fish for his family. This did not appear to disconcert the family of Grey-headed Swamphens and their fledglings in any which way, as they foraged among the tall reeds for their 'bread and butter'.

The team with DFO Mr Venugopal (Photo: JVD Moorty)

The in-uniform Mr Venugopal, accompanying us to the top of the dam, told us that the birds had bypassed our favourite birding spot and moved on to fresher pastures. This was backed up by the forest guard who said he had seen them at a village about 10km away. This was towards the interior, he said, and at a not-too-easily-accessible spot. We decided against braving the possible dirt-track and the sun that was slowly warming up, and birded just around the dam.

Glossy Ibis flock (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)



Glossy Ibis (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Green Bee-eater (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Our musings about the lack of activity brought about a small flock of Glossy Ibis coming in for a smooth landing amongst the reeds and the tall grasses on the water body. A Green Bee-eater was busy making sorties snapping up insects we could not even see.

Making an entry like a Grande Dame was a lone Pheasant-tailed Jacana followed by its cousin, the Bronze-winged Jacana. Both of them with their heads bent down – like the youth of today with their mobile phones! – probing the soft earth for their daily diet.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Bronze-winged Jacana (Photo: JVD Moorty)

As we were slowly making our way back to our cars to call it a day – it was getting to high noon by now – we were given a send-off by a pair of now-you-see-me-now-you-don't Black-headed Ibis in the paddy field.

Black-headed Ibis (Photo: JVD Moorty)

The Blue-tailed Bee-eater perched on the wire above the cars near the paddy fields, and the just-arrived White-throated Kingfisher oversaw our departure, an apt farewell from a bird that reminded me of my halcyon days of birding at this venue.

It was indeed a real pity that there were just a handful of our members to enjoy the surroundings, the relative paucity of birds on this day notwithstanding.

The full list of birds seen during the trip:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Grey Francolin	*Francolinus pondicerianus*	31	Bronze-winged Jacana	*Metopidius indicus*
2	Lesser Whistling-duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*	32	Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*
3	Cotton Teal	*Nettapus coromandelianus*	33	Wood Sandpiper	*Tringa glareola*
4	Indian Spot-billed Duck	*Anas poecilorhyncha*	34	River Tern	*Sterna aurantia*
5	Red-crested Pochard	*Netta rufina*	35	Oriental Pratincole	*Glareola maldivarum*
6	Garganey	*Spatula querquedula*	36	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*
7	Northern Shoveler	*Spatula clyptea*	37	Shikra	*Accipiter badius*
8	Eurasian Wigeon	*Mareca Penelope*	38	Indian House Swift	*Apus affinis*
9	Asian Openbill Stork	*Anastomus oscitans*	39	Asian Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus balasiensis*
10	Painted Stork	*Mycteria leucocephalus*	40	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*
11	Oriental Darter	*Anhinga melanogaster*	41	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*
12	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*	42	Spotted Dove	*Streptopilia chinensis*
13	Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	43	Greater Coucal	*Centropus cinensis*
14	Indian Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax fuschcallis*	44	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopaceus*
15	Yellow Bittern	*Ixobrychus sinensis*	45	Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*
16	Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*	46	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	*Merops philippinus*
17	Intermediate Egret	*Area intermedia*	47	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*
18	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	48	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*
19	Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	49	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*
20	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola bacchus*	50	Large Grey Babbler	*Argya malcolmi*
21	Black-Crowned Night Heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax*	51	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
22	Glossy Ibis	*Plegadis falcinellus*	52	Wire-tailed Swallow	*Hirundo smithii*
23	Black-headed Ibis	*Threskiornis melanocephalus*	53	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonutus cafer*
24	Common Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*	54	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*
25	Common Coot	*Fulica atra*	55	Indian Robin	*Copsychus fulicatus*
26	Grey-headed Swamphen	*Porphyrio poliocephalus*	56	Purple Sunbird	*Cynniris asiaticus*
27	White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*	57	Indian Silverbill	*Euodice malabarica*
28	Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*	58	Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*
29	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	59	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
30	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*	60	Paddyfield Pipit	*Anthus rufulus*

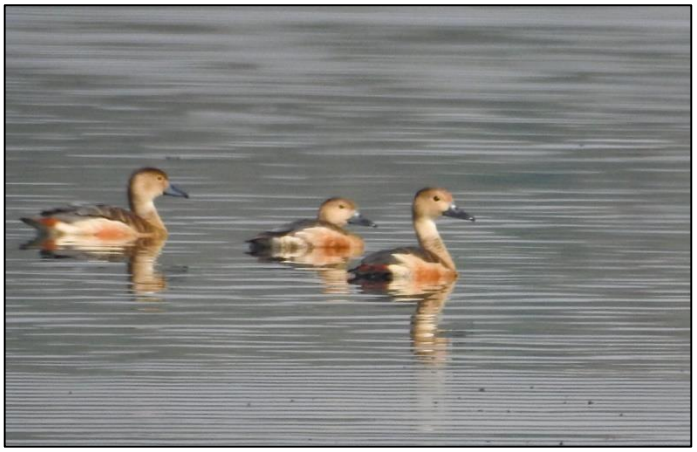
Some other photographs taken during the trip:

Grey Heron (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Baya Weaver female
(Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Black-headed Ibis
(Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Barn Swallow (Photo: JVD Moorty)



Lesser Whistling-duck (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Indian Robin (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Purple-rumped Sunbird female (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Red-crested Pochard & Eurasian Coot (Photo: JVD Moorty)

Flame Of The Forest (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Laughing Dove (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Rosy Starling (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Grey Pansy (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Blue Tiger (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Paddyfield Pipit (Photo: JVD Moorty)

River Tern (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Plain Tiger (Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Long-tailed Shrike
(Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

Green Bee-eater
(Photo: Dr G Samuel Sukumar)

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Trip Report: Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand, May 2023

Text & Photos: Aditya Rao

A view of Corbett National Park

Jim Corbett National Park is Indian's oldest National Park, and is situated near Ramnagar in Uttarakhand. It was established in 1936 with over 500 sq km of forest reserves.

Corbett provides a unique ecosystem, ranging from high montane regions up north to other diverse habitats like grasslands and scrub forests, it provides the perfect habitat for a large number of birds and animals, including very large mammals like elephants and bears.

Indian Sloth Bear with cub on its back

Several species of ungulates also call these areas their home – indirectly attracting the felines which make Corbett National Park famous. Given the wide range of ecosystems, being located as it is at the foothills of western Himalayas, it supports the extremely high diversity of birds too. This is especially true during winters, when several birds migrate to lower Corbett scrub forest, grasslands and human-modified landscapes.

Most people go and stay inside Corbett NP and go on multiple safaris to spot the national animal – the Bengal Tiger; but little do they realize that it is the Number #1 area in terms of avian species count in the entire sub-continent. If you go to ebird.org (https://ebird.org/region/IN), you will notice the Dhikala range of Jim Corbett has close 470+ birds reported from that region alone across all seasons!

As the summer was ending, we were contemplating a family trip, and decided to visit Jim Corbett before the schools started. Given that we were going with the family, I booked a hotel in Ramnagar and reserved for four safaris of three hours each, over the span of three days. We could only get bookings in the Jhirna and Dhela ranges and these places are not known for regular tiger sightings. So, unfortunately, we did not spot the tiger during this trip; but we did experience rich birding all through the safaris.

Our trip was all organized during the last week of May 2023. It must be noted that the park is closed during the monsoon season starting mid-June. Also, getting into Dhikala range will mean that you will have to take accommodation at the Forest Guest House, which may not have facilities good enough for families with young children.

Hooded Pitta

One important migrant right after the summers is the Hooded Pitta – which has been split into several species in the 2023 Ebird taxonomy changes – we were able to hear, spot and photograph it at multiple locations.

One other Pitta that was heard all over was the Indian Pitta – given its breeding season and nesting activity, it was found literally everywhere carrying nesting materials.

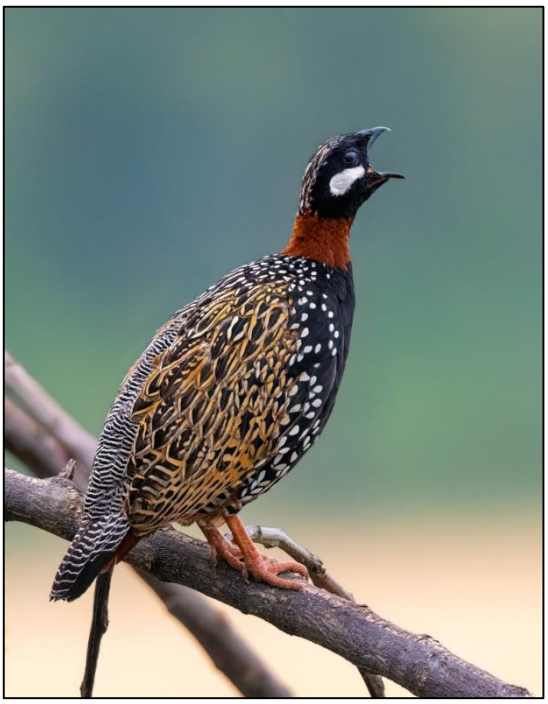
Indian Pitta

Egyptian Vulture

Given the large expanse of forest, we were also able to spot several vultures flying in the thermals; the Egyptian Vultures were the most common and found at many locations.

Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo

We spotted some other very interesting birds during the safari. For instance, the Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo – we had a hard time spotting it; it was easier if we followed the call. Like the Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo which winters in the south, it has a very similar and distinct five-note call.



Black Francolin

Also spotted in large numbers and making significant breeding calls was the Black Francolin. We frequently spotted the male calling out from a high perch, which gave us ample opportunity to photograph these birds.

Common Babbler

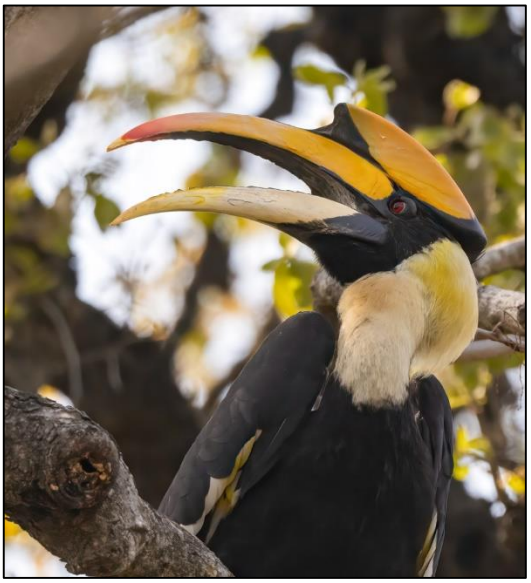
Lesser Coucal

Barred Buttonquail

Other interesting birds seen in the grassland were the not-so-common Common Babbler and Lesser Coucal. We also happened to sight the rare Barred Buttonquail, which ran across the road at one spot.

A watchtower in Dhela range of Corbett National Park

Oriental Pied Hornbill female



Great Hornbill male

Hornbills were plenty – Indian Grey Hornbill, Oriental Pied Hornbill and Great Hornbill. Along the River Kosi, we could also easily spot the Pied, Common, White-throated and Stork-billed Kingfishers.

Pied Kingfisher

Common Kingfisher

Stork-billed Kingfisher

White-throated Kingfisher

Another rare glimpse – though we could not get a clear identity initially – was the Spot-bellied Eagle Owl!

Spot-bellied Eagle Owl

Blue-bearded Bee-eater

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater

Green Bee-eater

Shikra

Blue-tailed Bee-eater

Crested Serpent Eagle

Deeper forest had, besides the Chestnut-headed and Green, several Blue-bearded and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters too.

Oriental Honey-buzzard

Black-winged Kite

Red-wattled Lapwing chasing Black Kite

Black Kite

Many raptors were also seen: Shikra, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Crested Serpent Eagle, Black Kite and Black-winged Kite.

The full list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Indian Peafowl	*Pavo cristatus*	26	Egyptian Vulture	*Neophron percnopterus*
2	Red Junglefowl	*Gallus gallus*	27	Oriental Honey-buzzard	*Pernis ptilorhynchus*
3	Grey Francolin	*Ortygornis pondicerianus*	28	Red-headed Vulture	*Sarcogyps calvus*
4	Black Francolin	*Francolinus francolinus*	29	Crested Serpent Eagle	*Spilornis cheela*
5	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	30	Shikra	*Accipiter badius*
6	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	31	Besra	*Accipiter virgatus*
7	Red Collared Dove	*Streptopelia tranquebarica*	32	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*
8	Spotted Dove	*Spilopelia chinensis*	33	Spot-bellied Eagle Owl	*Ketupa nipalensis*
9	Asian Emerald Dove	*Chalcophaps indica*	34	Spotted Owlet	*Athene brama*
10	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	*Treron phoenicopterus*	35	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*
11	Greater Coucal	*Centropus sinensis*	36	Great Hornbill	*Buceros bicornis*
12	Lesser Coucal	*Centropus bengalensis*	37	Indian Grey Hornbill	*Ocyceros birostris*
13	Pied Cuckoo	*Clamator jacobinus*	38	Oriental Pied Hornbill	*Anthracoceros albirostris*
14	Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo	*Surniculus lugubris*	39	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*
15	Common Hawk Cuckoo	*Hierococcyx varius*	40	Stork-billed Kingfisher	*Pelargopsis capensis*
16	Indian Thick-knee	*Burhinus indicus*	41	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*
17	River Lapwing	*Vanellus duvaucelii*	42	Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*
18	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	43	Blue-bearded Bee-eater	*Nyctyornis athertoni*
19	Little Ringed Plover	*Charadrius dubius*	44	Asian Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*
20	Barred Buttonquail	*Turnix suscitator*	45	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	*Merops philippinus*
21	Asian Woolly-necked Stork	*Ciconia episcopus*	46	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	*Merops leschenaulti*
22	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*	47	Indian Roller	*Coracias benghalensis*
23	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	48	Dollarbird	*Eurystomus orientalis*
24	Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	49	Coppersmith Barbet	*Psilopogon haemacephalus*
25	Black-winged Kite	*Elanus caeruleus*	50	Great Barbet	*Psilopogon virens*

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
51	Lineated Barbet	*Psilopogon lineatus*	80	Red-rumped Swallow	*Cecropis daurica*
52	Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	*Yungipicus canicapillus*	81	Black-crested Bulbul	*Rubigula flaviventris*
53	Black-rumped Flameback	*Dinopium benghalense*	82	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*
54	Streak-throated Woodpecker	*Picus xanthopygaeus*	83	Red-whiskered Bulbul	*Pycnonotus jocosus*
55	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	84	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
56	Plum-headed Parakeet	*Psittacula cyanocephala*	85	Yellow-eyed Babbler	*Chrysomma sinense*
57	Indian Pitta	*Pitta brachyura*	86	Indian White-eye	*Zosterops palpebrosus*
58	Hooded Pitta	*Pitta sordida*	87	Puff-throated Babbler	*Pellorneum ruficeps*
59	Small Minivet	*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*	88	Jungle Babbler	*Argya striata*
60	Scarlet Minivet	*Pericrocotus speciosus*	89	Common Babbler	*Argya caudata*
61	Black-headed Cuckooshrike	*Lalage melanoptera*	90	White-crested Laughingthrush	*Garrulax leucolophus*
62	Black-hooded Oriole	*Oriolus xanthornus*	91	Brahminy Starling	*Sturnia pagodarum*
63	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	*Hemipus picatus*	92	Chestnut-tailed Starling	*Sturnia malabarica*
64	Common Iora	*Aegithina tiphia*	93	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*
65	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*	94	Jungle Myna	*Acridotheres fuscus*
66	White-bellied Drongo	*Dicrurus caerulescens*	95	Indian Robin	*Copsychus fulicatus*
67	Hair-crested Drongo	*Dicrurus hottentottus*	96	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*
68	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus paradiseus*	97	White-rumped Shama	*Copsychus malabaricus*
69	Indian Paradise-flycatcher	*Terpsiphone paradisi*	98	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
70	Bay-backed Shrike	*Lanius vittatus*	99	Pied Bushchat	*Saxicola caprata*
71	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*	100	Purple Sunbird	*Cinnyris asiaticus*
72	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*	101	Crimson Sunbird	*Aethopyga siparaja*
73	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	102	Golden-fronted Leafbird	*Chloropsis aurifrons*
74	Cinereous Tit	*Parus cinereus*	103	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*
75	Bengal Bushlark	*Mirafra assamica*	104	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
76	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*	105	Yellow-throated Sparrow	*Gymnoris xanthocollis*
77	Ashy Prinia	*Prinia socialis*	106	White-browed Wagtail	*Motacilla maderaspatensis*
78	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	107	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*
79	Wire-tailed Swallow	*Hirundo smithii*			

Some other photographs taken during the trip:

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

Jacobin Cuckoo

Streak-throated Woodpecker

Monitor Lizard

Spotted Deer

Emerald Dove

Crimson Sunbird

Wire-tailed Swallow

Indian Peafowl and Grey Langur face-off

Indian Paradise-flycatcher male

Indian Paradise-flycatcher female

Puff-throated Babbler

Lineated Barbet

Red Collared Dove

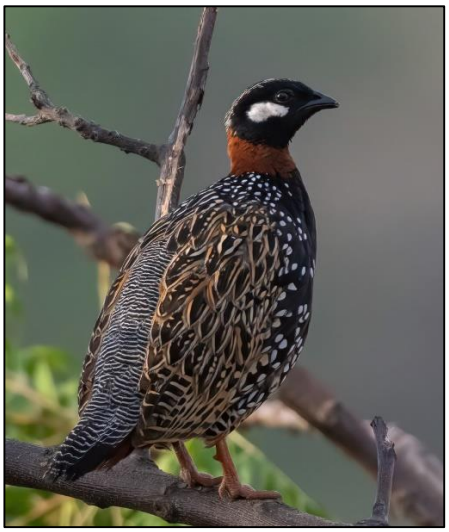
Red Junglefowl

Indian Roller

River Lapwing

Purple Sunbird male

Red-wattled Lapwing chick



Black Francolin

Indian White-eye

Black-crested Bulbul

White-rumped Shama female

Indian Peafowl male

Bengal Bushlark

Grey Francolin

Pied Bushchat male

Green Bee-eater

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Bird of the Month

Text and Photo: Umesh Mani

River Lapwing (*Vanellus duvaucelii*)

River Lapwing (Gajoldoba, West Bengal, January 24, 2021)

Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Charadriidae
Genus: *Vanellus*
Species: *V. duvaucelii*
Size: 29-32 cm

Description & distribution: The River Lapwing, earlier known as the Spur-winged Lapwing, is a compactly-built, attractive member of the plover family. It is easily recognized by its black occipital crest, crown, face and throat, contrasting with white nape and side of the neck. It has a greyish-brown breast band and white underparts with a black belly patch. Upperparts are light brown with a black-tipped white tail and white rump. In flight, it shows striking colours, the black primaries contrasting with white underwings and upperwing secondaries and brown upperwing coverts. On the ground, its hunched posture, with head and neck drawn in, is a clear giveaway. Both sexes are similar, though the male is slightly larger. Juvenile birds show brown tips to black the black head feathers, a sandier brown back, and pale fringes to upperpart and wing covert feathers.

It is a resident breeder in most parts of its range, which extends from Northern India starting from western Uttar Pradesh, south to western Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, and east across Nepal, Bhutan, the North-eastern states of India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Vietnam. It does not appear to disperse much during winter.

Habitat & behaviour: The River Lapwing prefers the shoals and sand banks of larger rivers and lakes, and is hardly ever seen away from these habitats. It is not very gregarious, and is usually seen in pairs or small groups. Very like the Red-wattled Lapwing, the River Lapwing too feeds by running in short spurts, dipping to pick up food. It is also quite vigilant, taking off or at least moving away in response to presence of humans or other perceived threats. Its diet consists mainly of insects, worms, crustaceans, mollusks and small frogs, taken from nearby wet fields, farmland and grassland. Its flight is slow, and the call is a single-note, high-pitched *did*, *did*, *did*, given during display or alarm, and sounding quite similar to the Yellow-wattled Lapwing.

Nesting: The River Lapwing breeds generally between March and June. The breeding display, given on the ground, is quite elaborate, and includes stooping, spinning, stretching and crest-raising. The nest is a shallow scrape amidst stones or gravel in the ground or exposed sand banks, and the usual clutch consists of 3-4 yellowish or olive eggs, heavily blotched and spotted with brown or black marks.

Local name: The River Lapwing is known as *'Zirdi'* in Hindi, *'Chitawa'* in Telugu, *'Aalkaatti'* in Tamil (a name it shares with most lapwings) and *'Manjakkanni'* in Malayalam.

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For information, write to: Deccan Birders, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500034. **Website:** www.deccanbirders.in. **E-group:** http://groups.google.co.in/group/deccanbirders. **Society membership** (in Rs.): Annual: 500 per annum; Student: 200 per annum; Corporate: 2000 per annum; Life: 3000. (*Add Rs 75 for outstation cheques.)*